

Establishing Priorities

Theme and Level

Theme: Evaluate Options

Level: Looking Deeper, Next Steps

At a Glance

Students learn how to establish priorities by participating in a "Crisis in Space" activity then learn to use a prioritizing tool to make personal and career decisions.

Time: 100 minutes.

Essential Questions

- How do I set priorities well?

Preparation

- Reserve computer lab with overhead projector
- Establish CIS portfolios before this lesson
- Decide how much time groups will spend on the "Crisis in Space" activity
- Print *Crisis in Space Worksheet*, one per student plus six to seven extras for small groups
- Print *Priorities Worksheets*, two per student
- *Optional:* Print instructor's copy of *Crisis in Space Answers* if desired
- *Optional:* Complete your personal decision-making grid on the Priorities Sample (Slide 5 in the PowerPoint presentation) for students to view during the lesson

Steps

1. Show PowerPoint (PPT) Slide 1. Tell students that the goal of this lesson is for them to learn how to set priorities, which is an important life and career skill.
2. Show PPT Slide 2. Ask students if they have ever received a message coded "high priority." Ask students what the term means (order of importance or urgency) and how they react to high priority messages.
3. Ask the class to share some examples of both short-term and long-term priorities.
4. Divide the class into groups of four to five.
5. Show PPT Slide 3. Explain that you are going to show them a situation where people need to identify and select their priorities. Explain that, as a group, they must decide the priorities and support their decisions with logical reasons.
6. Distribute the *Crisis in Space Worksheets*.
7. Explain that before working as a group, each student will complete the worksheet individually. They will then compare and discuss their answers as a group.
8. After students have completed their individual worksheets, distribute one more *Crisis in Space Worksheet* to each group and instruct them to complete it together.
9. Tell students that they should assume that this situation is critical, that they need to decide urgently, and state the amount of time they have to complete the task.
10. Refer to the *Crisis in Space Answers* if students have questions and/or if you printed it earlier.
11. When the allotted time expires, ask each group to share their decisions and their reasoning with the class.
12. Show PPT Slide 4. It contains the answers to the *Crisis in Space Worksheet*.
13. Explain that the top five priorities (the most critical ones) should be the same but after that they may vary from their group's answers.
14. Ask the class to discuss what it was like to make a group prioritization decision.
15. Ask students to share how they arrived at their prioritized selections by majority vote or consensus?
16. Explain that although it may seem simpler and faster to do priority ranking individually, the group process brings the added benefit of several perspectives.
17. Explain to students that prioritizing is an important part of career decision-making.
18. It can be difficult to select school courses or electives, but choosing a career and deciding upon where to attend postsecondary school are crucial life decisions. Career decisions are often complex, involving many factors.
19. Explain that you are going to introduce a decision-making strategy that can be used for many of these types of difficult decisions.
20. Show PPT Slide 5. This slide shows the Priorities Sample. Explain that taking the time to prioritize several options is an important part of making a good decision. Also explain that they can prioritize their options by comparing them one at a time to each other.
21. Demonstrate how to complete the sample as though it were your decision.
22. Explain to the students how to use the grid by making checkmarks to indicate one preference over another.
23. Once completed, rank the options by simply adding up the check marks.
24. Ask students to consider a relatively simple decision that they will need to make. Suggest some options, such as which movie to see this weekend, where to go for lunch, or how to spend some discretionary income.
25. Distribute the *Priorities Worksheets* and ask the students to complete it using their own decisions and options.
26. Once completed, ask the students to share their results and their reactions to the process and results.
27. Distribute another *Priorities Worksheet*.
28. Tell the students that they will be completing this worksheet as a homework assignment.
29. Tell them that the decision for this worksheet needs to be focused on career or training choices.
30. Explain that they will need to brainstorm what is important to them to come up with the factors needed for the grid.
31. Show PPT Slide 6. This slide was designed to stimulate their thoughts, as you ask the following questions:
 - Do you want to work indoors or outside?
 - Would you like your career to require travel?
 - How dangerous can it be?
 - Are there specific skills you want to be sure to use?
 - Does it need to be a career that's easy to get a job in?
 - Do you want to be able to do this type of work in your home state, a small town, or in a big city?
 - Do you want to earn a lot of money, have job security, benefits, and/or have flexible work hours?
 - Does it matter what kind of training is required?
32. In a subsequent class, create small groups and ask students to share their completed homework assignment.
33. Discuss as a class the utility of prioritizing.
34. Show PPT Slide 7. Ask students to share some future decisions for which this tool might work well.

Variations and Accommodations

- Give students a copy of the *Priorities Sample Worksheet* and, for practice, ask them to compare the options and rank their own preferences.
- Students could use the *Priorities Worksheet* to consider several aspects of one occupation or program of study. For example, they could choose one occupation or program of study, list several aspects of it, then work through their preferences and ranking to determine which aspects of the occupation are most important to them.
- Explore the process of generating alternatives in more depth.
- Work one-on-one with any student needing special assistance or pair student with a helpful partner or group member for the activity.

Assessment

Use the *Establishing Priorities Scoring Guide* to evaluate student work.

Portfolio

Students enter their reflections about this activity in the **What did you learn about how you set goals and make decisions for the career work you completed?** text box in the Evaluate Options section of Career Plan.

Materials

Classroom with computer, overhead projector and CIS access

[Establishing Priorities \(PPTX\)](#)

[Crisis in Space Worksheet \(PDF\)](#)

[Crisis in Space Worksheet \(DOCX\)](#)

[Crisis in Space Answers \(PDF\)](#)

[Crisis in Space Answers \(DOCX\)](#)

[Priorities Worksheet \(PDF\)](#)

[Priorities Worksheet \(DOCX\)](#)

[Establishing Priorities Scoring Guide \(PDF\)](#)

[Establishing Priorities Scoring Guide \(DOCX\)](#)

Goals and Standards

Common Core State Standards

- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Reading Informational Text
- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Speaking & Listening
- Mathematical Practice: Make Sense of Problems and Persevere in Solving Them
- Mathematical Practice: Construct Viable Arguments and Critique the Reasoning of Others
- Mathematical Practice: Use Appropriate Tools Strategically
- Mathematical Practice: Look for and Make Use of Structure

National Career Development Guidelines

- GOAL CM2 Use a process of decision-making as one component of career development.
- GOAL CM3 Use accurate, current and unbiased career information during career planning and management.

American School Counselor Association

- Career Development

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding, Analyzing, Applying

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success

Mindset Standards

- Self-Confidence in Ability to Succeed

Behavior Standards: Learning Strategies

- Demonstrate Critical-Thinking Skills to Make Informed Decisions
- Demonstrate Creativity
- Use Time-Management, Organizational and Study-Skills
- Gather Evidence and Consider Multiple Perspectives to Make Informed Decisions

Behavior Standards: Self-Management Skills

- Demonstrate Ability to Assume Responsibility
- Demonstrate Self-Discipline and Self-Control
- Demonstrate Perseverance to Achieve Long- and Short-Term Goals

Behavior Standards: Social Skills

- Use Effective Oral and Written Communication Skills and Listening Skills
- Create Positive and Supportive Relationships with Other Students
- Use Effective Collaboration and Cooperation Skills
- Use Leadership and Teamwork Skills to Work Effectively in Diverse Teams
- Demonstrate Advocacy Skills and Ability to Assert Self, when Necessary